

A black and white photograph of a man, likely a Hindu deity or a religious figure, wearing a white shawl and glasses. He is seated and playing a mridangam (a type of drum) with his hands. The background is dark and textured.

Phoenix

JOURNAL ON MUSIC & DANCE

October 96

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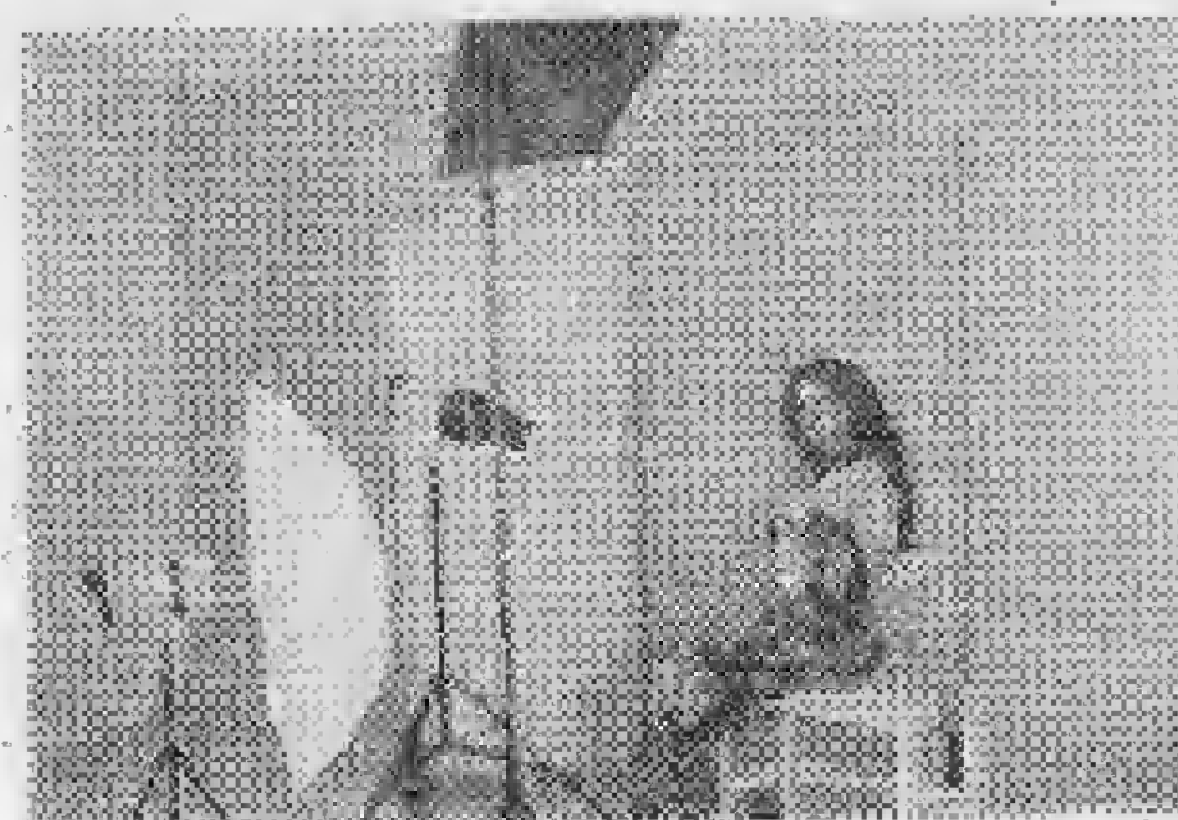
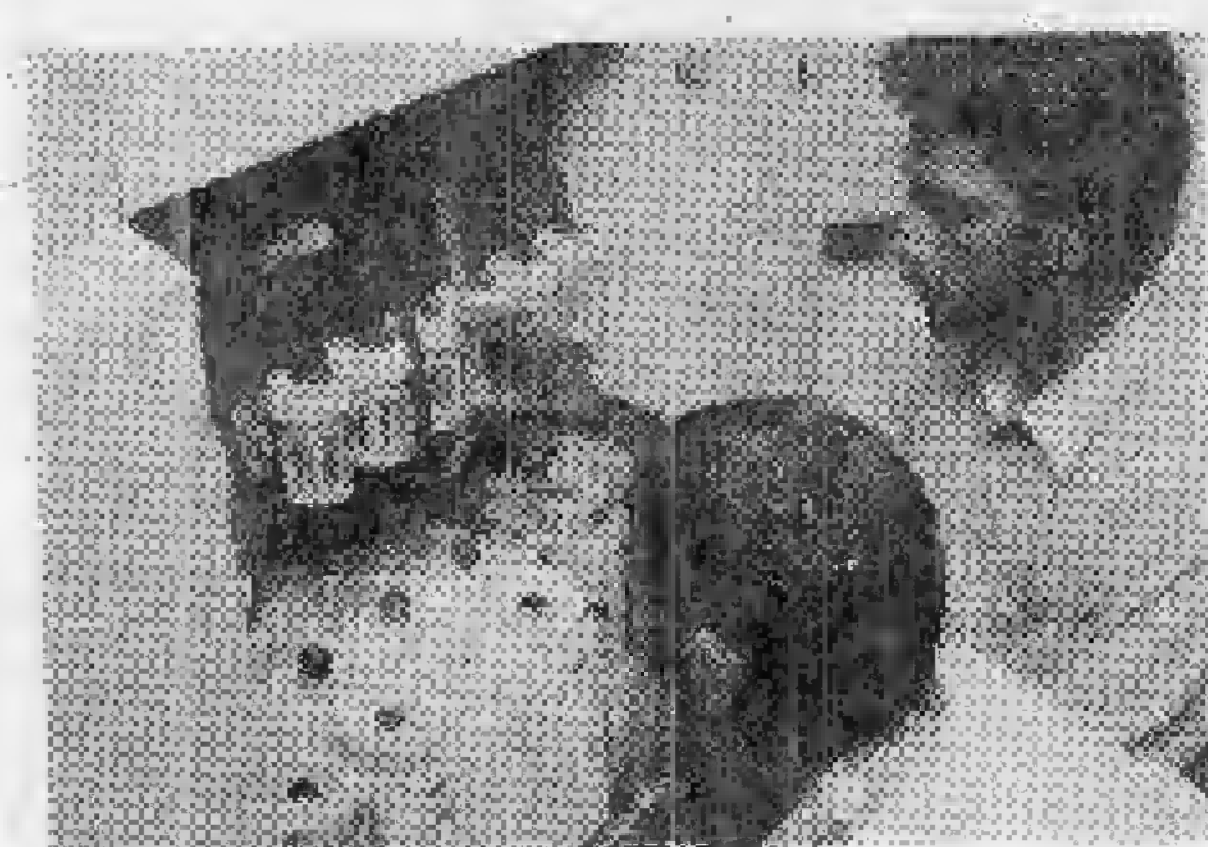
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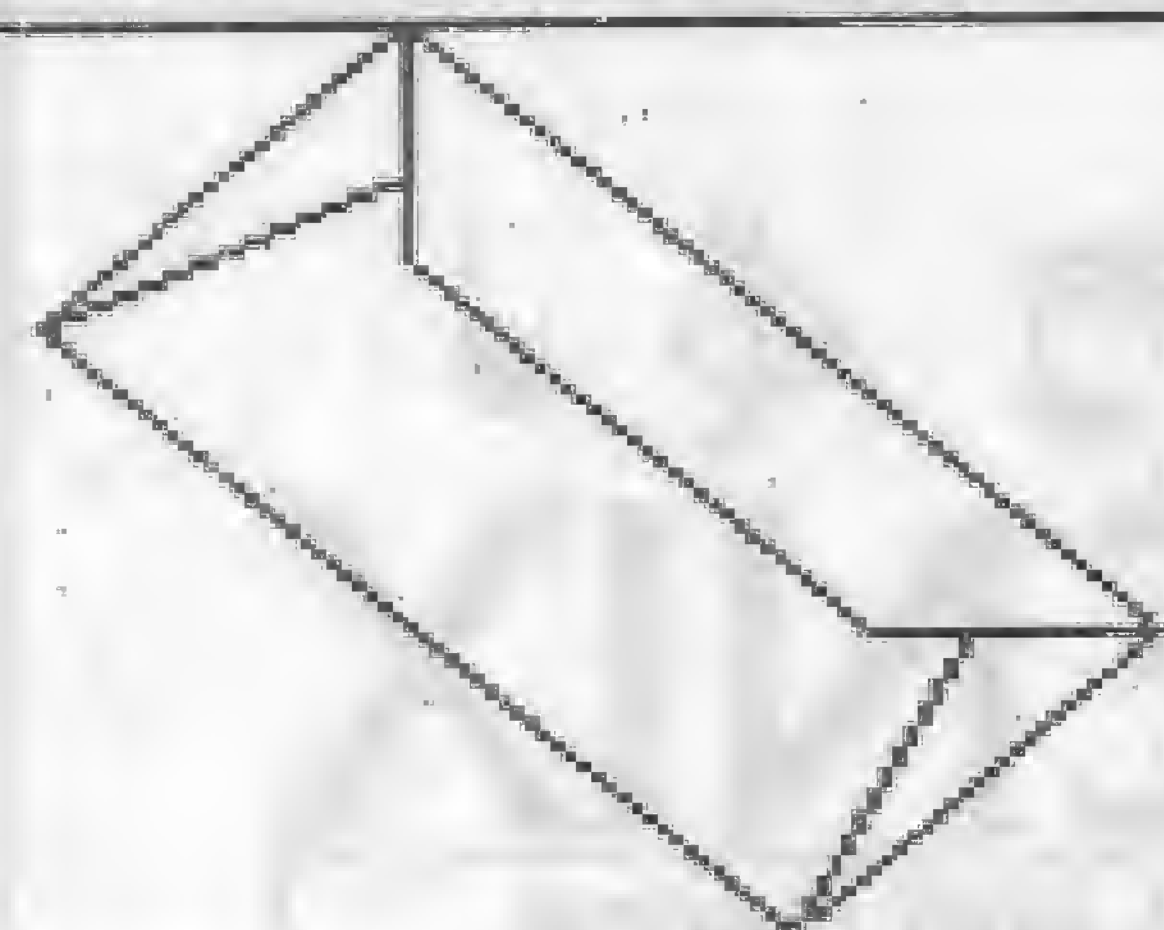
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Cover Photo

BANGALORE K VENKATRAM

by N.Sundarraj



READERS Write

Fine Write-up

Appropos articles, 'Inheritor of a Glorious Tradition', article on the achievements and life of Veena Doreswami Iyengar, 'Mysore Bani in Veena', article by V. Doreswami Iyengar and 'Master of the Strings' article by S. Ramachandran.

All these are finely brought out. I have come to understand from Veena Doreswami Iyengar himself, that Veena Subanna had practised vocal classical music with Mysore Sada Siva Rao. This is really an added embellishment to Vainika Subbanna. That is why Subbanna has become the Guru for vocal music to Asthana Vidwan Belakavadi Srinivasa Iyengar whose book "Gaanamrutha" is an asset to learners on Carnatic classical music.

S. Ramachandran directly questions, "But do we have many creative artistes in the true sense of the term?". The answer to this question is more pessimistic than optimistic. Doreswamy Iyengar is a true creative artist who has truly elevated classical music from the general gloom that appears to have settled on it. He really presents great compositions in the style they ought to be. The uniqueness of Doreswamy Iyengar is that he has a natural aversion for contact mike. His art of tana playing has attracted such glorious persons as Palghat Mani Iyer. This, in itself, is a great tribute to his uniqueness.

H.N. Rajanna, Bhadravathi

In Defence of Prathishtana

When the editor is speaking of

Karnataka Nrithya Prathishtana being superfluous, in the same breath he speaks of a glorious tradition - Mysore bani in veena be true of dance? When pandanallur, vazhvoor and Kanchi styles can prevail why not Mysore style? As far as my knowledge goes these traditions of music and dance came down from the time of Vijayanagara period and spread with some variation, all over South India. If Karnataka has taken a lot from the Tanjore quartet, they might have earlier imbibed a lot from the existent art of Vijayanagar empire, of which we can be proud of!

None of us has any prejudice against languages or people. If one or two Kannada songs are danced, that does not mean Tamil Nadu people are ready for integration and will learn the best of Abhinaya from us.

There is nothing wrong in being proud of our language and art and hoping to preserve it for posterity. As artistes we have thoroughly enjoyed what we have learnt and definitely want to preserve it for our future generations and that is the aim of 'Nrithya Karnataka'.

*Lalita Srinivasan,
Director NUPURA, Bangalore*

Self Audition

I read with interest your editorial 'Self Audition' (June 96). This is what some of us were hesitating to write. It deserves and demands an urgent action by the authorities, how so ever delicate the position may be. In fact what is true of AIR is true of DD also.

Probably AIR/DD broadcast classical music programmes late in the night deliberately to avoid criticism as very few will listen to them.

More such subjects must be repeated often so that the slumbering bosses and bigwigs wake up and act.

K.N. Anantharam, Bangalore

Review Doordarshan

I eagerly await PHOENIX just to see the 'Calling AIR'. This is the only magazine in the country which evaluates the AIR programmes.

I suggest you to take up reviewing the Doordarshan programmes also.

Rajeshwari, Bangalore

Vasudeva Keerthana Manjari

Mr Justice A.J. Sadashiva, of the Karnataka High Court released the cassette and book 'Vasudeva Keerthana Manjari' at the packed auditorium of Sri Ramamandira Association, Bangalore on September 29, 96.

Speaking on the occasion secretary of the kendra and S. Krishnamurthy, for their services in the cause of 'music'.

S.B. Ramachandra Rao, former general manager, Bharat Electronics Ltd., Bangalore, who presided complimented the Kendra on its achievement.

This was followed by a vocal concert by S. Shankar, accompanied by B. Raghuram (violin) and Vasudev (Mridangam).

The cassettes and books were sold at the venue at a concessional price.

Editorial

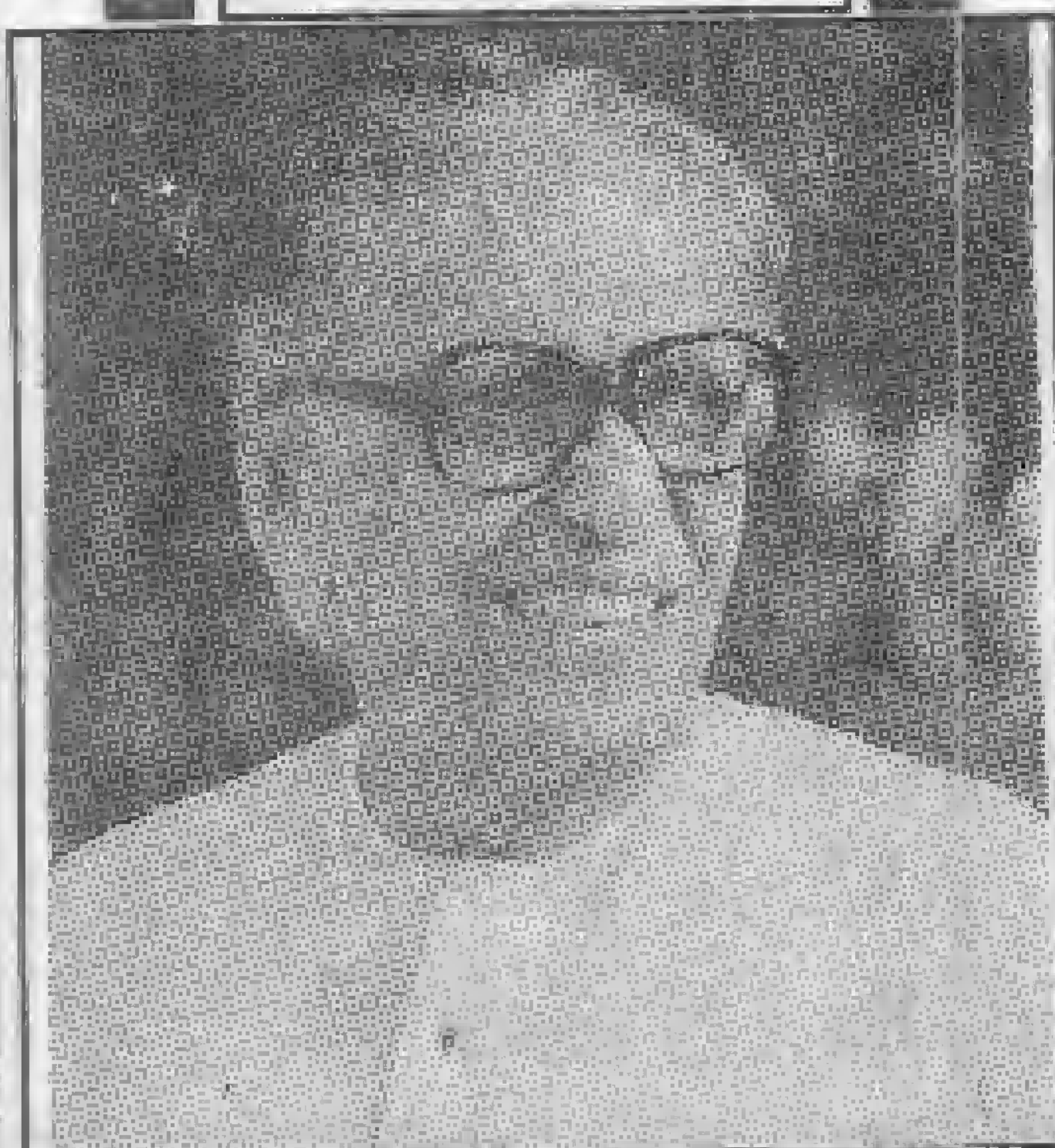
Culture, Politics, Food

The Karnataka Government is going a whole hog in promoting art and culture in the State. Whether in the munificence to the more than a dozen academies, institution of annual awards to worthies or conducting festivals of art, the concerned departments like the Directorate of Kannada and Culture, Tourism, Youth Services and the department of Information and Publicity vie with one another to steal a march. Artists, both plastic and performing, also take it as a privilege to take part in all these activities, activities that call for approbation.

But neither these departments nor the powers that be seem to realise that it could be disastrous to mix culture with politics or food. In such an eventuality, culture perforce takes a back seat, nay gets dismally humiliated. Yet it is surprising that this home truth should have escaped their attention. Perhaps the euphoria of it all is so overwhelming that it makes them turn a blind eye to the reality.

But for the artists who would naturally feel elated at the prospect of taking part in a State function, it is insulting when considerations other than aesthetic take precedence in the order of things. Such philistine attitude is indeed a mockery!

That is what happened in the famous Rajgir festival in Bihar sometime ago when a reputed dancer cut short her recital and another equally celebrated dancing couple withdrew from it. The experience back home is not more elevating. Instances are galore. In one such, a NRI dancer from America was slated to perform in a glamorous function where more than half a dozen noted artists were being felicitated with State awards. As usual, the Chief Minister who was to give away the awards did not turn up. But his effusive note eulogising the services of each, together with the preambles from the reader, consumed a major part of the evening. The formalities with the concerned minister who gave away the awards giving her own sermon befitting the occasion and the finishing touches stretched beyond the reasonable 8:30 p.m. And by the time the stage was got ready for the dancer, there were hardly a dozen left in the hall. It was a chilling experience for the hapless dancer who limply ran through the card.



Editorial

Another well-known dancer who was faced with a similar situation was more articulate in her reaction. She was billed for the Independence Day entertainment. The start was inordinately delayed, the Governor and the Chief Minister who were to be the chief guests, forgiving themselves at the last minute. Much time was lost before the dancer got her turn to go on stage, more than an hour behind schedule. And just when she was getting into her own with a Tarangam, the Minister for Culture took her leave, followed by her retinue and a whole contingent of officers of the department. The dancer was left with no option than to withdraw, but not before she gave vent to her chagrin to the officer in charge.

The worst was yet to be and that came in the prestigious Karnataka Utsav in New Delhi recently. It was a big event for the State, a proud son of which is the Prime Minister. He was there with all his ardent admirers on time to inaugurate the three-day fiesta that got on way with a gala folk form. But by the time a senior Bharathanatyam dancer went on stage all the fervour among the dignitaries was on the wane, especially with the richly flavoured eatables on the other side filling their nostrils. Even the Chief Minister seemed preoccupied in discussions with his minions.

Distraught, the usually suave dancer lost her temper. At once she called it a day, but not before going to the mike and chastising the unbecoming audience for showing disrespect to a classical art which had added lustre to Indian culture. She also pleaded with the powers that be to keep culture away from politics and food if they were really proud of their heritage and wanted to promote it.

Sane words from one who has dedicated her life for the art. Comments thereto are superfluous !

S.N. Chandrasekar

This issue is sponsored by

Smt and Sri V.Krishnan

Sri V.Krishnan is the Founder President of
Parthasarathy Sangeetha Sabha and the
General Manager (Commercial), Indian Telephone Industries,
Bangalore.

Sri Krishnan is a well-known philanthropist who is helping
many cultural organisations.

He is the patron of Percussion Arts Centre, Bangalore.

Cover Story

Bangalore K Venkatram Ghatam Maestro with a Difference

The announcement of the Bangalore Gayana Samaja that Bangalore K. Venkatram has been selected to preside over its annual music conference this year did not come as a surprise to artistic circles in the State. The surprise was that the signal honour should have eluded this ardent, indefatigable and trenchant lover of the art so long!

Venkatram's claim for the distinction is not just as a ghatam vidwan, though his contribution

in that disposition is not insignificant. He has provided ghatam accompaniment to more than three generation of vocalists and instrumentalists in the company of stalwarts like Palghat Mani Iyer, Palani Subbudu, Muruga Bhupathy, etc. Yet he is not the senior-most in the genre, seniority both in respect of age and claim.

His claim is buttressed by his unrivalled, long-standing service in the cause of music and musicians. It is in that capacity that he has won the admiration and gratitude of artiste community. Honours such

as these are only recognition of that service, something which should encourage such individuals to go on.

Venkataram is one such individual whose life and work have enriched the ambience in which he has lived and worked. Whether as a responsible officer in a PSU or as an artiste, he has left the impress of his acumen in no uncertain terms.

If the one helped him in meeting the creature comforts, the other served as a succor to nurture his artistic sensibilities. In either case, he has

acquitted himself creditably as events have proved.

He has gracefully retired from his job, his brain-child, the Karnataka Ganakala Parishath has established itself as a frontline organisation of musicians and the Percussive Arts Centre, his youngest offspring is making strides as a unifying force for artistes engaged in that pursuit.



Amidst all this, he has not neglected his duty to his family, the ideal two-plus-two having no grouse as far as fulfilling individual aspirations.

Venkatram's first love, however, has remained music with particular reference to percussion. Especially after his superannuation he has been giving his full-time for the Centre, especially with the Ganakala Parishath getting its roots firm and unassailable. Like the latter, the Centre is also growing in size and usefulness, extending the sphere of its activities beyond the confines of the State. The five-day conference in connection with the centenary celebrations of Mayuram

Viswanatha Sastry, a noted contemporary composer, held with eclat in Madras not long ago, bears eloquent testimony to the Centre's expanding influence.

With his inherent interest in percussive art, Venkataram in association with the Ayyanar College of Music has developed a Percussive Ensemble, comprising almost all instruments in vogue. The experiment has thrown open opportunities to youngsters in the line to fully explore the possibilities in rhythm-oriented exercises.

Venkatram's interest in vocal music is as abiding. The famed flutist B.N. Suresh was one such artiste to have benefited by his knowledge of vocal music. With the cooperation of his wife, G.R. Jaya, who is herself a vocalist of reckoning, he continues to impart training to many vocalists like Padma Gurudatt, who has specialised in singing the intricate 'Avadhana Pallavi'. His daughter V. Kalavathi has already made a name as a competent vocalist of both the classical and light variety.

His son V. Krishna, on the other hand has taken after the father-opting for the percussion. His indeed is a small family of musicians where one member complements the faculties of the other to share the joys of creative endeavour.

For the small family of PHOENIX of which Venkataram has been a friend and philosopher, it is a happy occasion to rejoice. They join his numerous fans to congratulate Venkataram and complement the Samaja on its worthy choice.

DOWN MEMORY LANE

Bangalore K.Venkataram

My reminiscences in the field of music cover over five decades spanning association of four generations of musicians. I owe my early entry into music to my father, post master S. Krishnaswamy Iyer who virtually forced me into it.

Those were the days when weekly meets of musicians were common features at Chamarajapet commencing from around 10 p.m at the instance of the versatile vocal-violin vidwan L.S. Narayanaswamy Bhagavathar and his brother advocate-musician L.S. Seshagiri Rao.

My father, who was a keen admirer (himself would sing while shaving and while teaching my elder sister Paruvatham - later Parvathy Krishna-swamy), had an obsession for Bhagavathar and Rao. I was put under ghatam vidwan. K.S. Manjunathan, who was a protege of this family. My association with him lasted till his demise in 1989.

My association with Manjunathan and later with the great violin maestro T. Chowdiah was a period which brought enlightenment to me in a big way. Chowdiah used to stay at the Malabar Lodge at Chamarajapet, and sometimes at the residence of A.Venkobachar (mrudanga vidwan A.V.Anand's father). This opened lot of opportuni-

ties for intimate association with him. When Manjunathan became very busy travelling and performing with him, A.V. Anand and myself were given mrdangam practice with several artistes who used to visit Manjunath. I remember artistes like Sunderraja Iyengar, Hebbani Venkataramana Sastry, T. Srinivasacharya, N.L. Cheluvaraj, H.V. Venkataramiah, *et al* who used to sing for us.

Anand who was senior to me used to provide mrdangam for several solo recitals of Chowdiah with Manjunathan on ghatam. Whenever

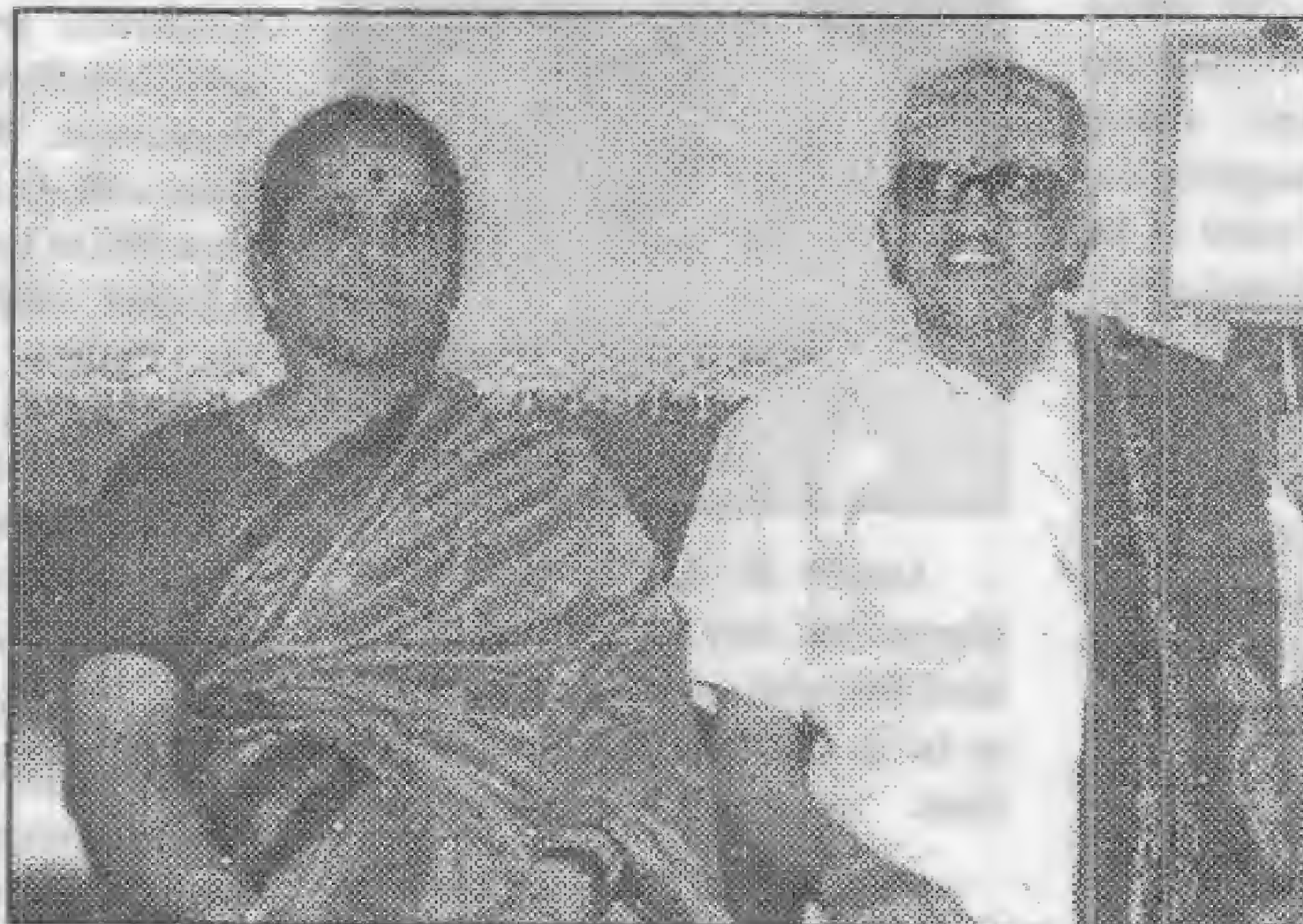
ghatam is still green in my memory. Other concerts of solo recitals which I played had M.L.Veerabhadriah, T.M. Puttaswamiah, M.S. Ramiah, A.V. Anand on mrudangam. Greats like Ariyakkudi, Musiri, Alathur, Madurai Mani, G.N.B. were the artistes with whom I had opportunities to play because of Chowdiah. I was fortunate enough to play with great mrudangam trio. Palghat Mani Iyer, Palani Subramanya Pillai and C.S. Murugabhupathy.

Before recollecting my association with some of these greats, I would recall the days when I was exposed to giants of that generation through their concerts mainly at the Bangalore Gayana Samaja. As I recall these from memory, thoughts could be disjointed.

Around 1946, when I used to pass through the Shankariah Hall on my way to the Bangalore High School, the English and Kannada placards would attract my attention to the

details of the musicians scheduled for concerts in the Gayana Samaja. That decade and the next were formulative years of my career in music and I managed to attend all major concerts of the time.

The admission to the concerts was restricted only to members and to



Bangalore K. Venkataram and Jaya Venkataram

Manjunathan was preoccupied, I was asked to provide ghatam. Thus, I had several unique occasions to accompany Chowdiah in concerts. Mysore Vasudevacharya's concert with Chowdiah, Ayyamani Iyer (mrudangam), Arunachalappa (harmonium) for which I played

those who had tickets. A thatched barricade around the hall would prevent listening of the concerts from outside. There were no amplifiers except for some veena recitals. The original voice levels, instrumental tones and timbres could be heard in their natural sound levels without any distortions of any sort.

The major concerts would be with one of the three greats, Palghat Mani Iyer, Palani Subramanya Pillai or Murugabhupathy. I would somehow go to places where these artistes were lodged (mostly the Modern Hindu Hotel at Ananda Rao circle) and seek their patronage to take me as their disciple and take me to the concerts with them. They would oblige and I used to attend all concerts played by them. V.T. Srinivasan, the secretary of the Samaja was a scrupulous person and would not tolerate anyone attending without a valid ticket. He would buy tickets even for his family members despite hosting the artistes in his home. Krishnappa, his assistant was equally efficient and strictly check every member.

These two identified my attending all the major concerts and decided to catch me. It was a concert of Maharajapuram Vishwanatha Iyer with Papa and Murugabhupathy. I had met Murugabhupathy in a hotel on the SJP Road and arranged for myself to go with him. Immediately as we landed Krishnappa accosted me and was promptly told by Murugabhupathy that he had brought me with him! V.T. Srinivasan and Krishnappa decided to keep a vigil over me.

Once I went to a concert buying a ticket for Rs 6/- for the first time. It

was GNB's concert with Palghat Mani who was felicitated on receipt of the Academi Award (then called President's Award). It was a packed hall. GNB had brought a sruthi box and needed assistance to play it. Mani Iyer asked me to go up to the dais and play the sruthi box, which I obeyed

complimentary pass. From then on he would be enquiring about my progress regularly. I admired him so much that I adopted his sense of punctuality and administrative qualities.

When he was Financial Manager in Indian Telephone Industries, we had frequent discussions on music and musicians and it was in Gayana Samaja that I first played and have been playing with several artistes.

In 1956 when Palghat Mani Iyer and Alathoor Subbiyer were the secretaries of the Thyagabrahma Sabha in Tiruvaiyaru. Mani Iyer encouraged me by scheduling me with Madurai Srirangam Iyengar, Madras Balakrishna Iyer (violin) and Kumbakonam Rangu Iyengar (Mrudangam) in a top slot. When I was about to climb the dais, Subbaiyer asked me as to who told me to join this group. When told of Mani Iyer's instructions he could not help allowing me. Later, after that slot, Subbaiyer himself scheduled me for several senior slots. It was at that time that I met Umayalpuram Sivaraman who played with several seniors. I also

met his father, Kasinathan at Kumbakonam.

In 1953, Chamarajapet Sree Rama Seva Mandali organised a Nagaswaram recital of Tiruvaduthurai T.N. Rajarathnam Pillai. S.V. Narayanaswamy Rao, the Secretary of the mandali asked me to play ghatam for the concert. Guruvayur Dorai was the mrudangam artiste. This was relayed from the Mysore Station of All India Radio from 7.45 to 9 p.m. My name was announced as Bangalore



Bangalore Venkatram, Jaya Venkatram with V. Krishna and V. Kalavathi

instantaneously. On seeing me on the platform Srinivasan sent word with Krishnappa to know how I got entry and I promptly produced the counterfoil. After the concert I was asked to stay back. Srinivasan returned my ticket amount and also gave me a cover containing Rs 10/- for playing the sruthi. He questioned me on my regular attendance and wanted to know how I managed to be a disciple of all the three at the same time. When I explained my predicament, he immediately issued a

K.Venkataram. There was another Kadathur Venkataraman playing ghatam then and to identify me, 'Bangalore' was added and it has come to stay.

When the thamboora was being tuned, Rajarathnam Pillai noticed that the sruthi of my ghatam was slightly higher and he told me not to worry about it, as he was used to be accompanied by Thavil which is not tuned. On the platform, when he noticed that the sruthi of my ghatam was in tune with the thamboora, he checked up his sruthi box to satisfy himself that the thamboora had not been meddled with. He questioned if I had got another ghatam replaced. I replied that I had tuned the ghatam. He took the microphone and exclaimed "what times have come; people have started tuning ghatams!" Later, he appreciated my effort so much publicly that it boosted my career status.

Around 1957-58, when flute B.N. Suresh was being guided by me for concert planning and techniques, I took Suresh to Adyar where our grand old man, Mysore Vasudevacharya had his abode. We were in Madras for a concert. Acharya asked Suresh to play. He rendered "Raa Raa Raajeevalochana", a krithi of Vasudevacharya himself. He asked Suresh who had taught the krithi. When told that I had taught him, I was asked how I learnt it. I had the script from "Vani" the Telugu Akashvani journal when Voleti Venkateswarulu was teaching in the "learn to sing" broadcast from Vijayawada and Hyderabad.

The notation for the charana in this script is slightly at variance with the one published in the "Vasudeva Keerthana Manjari". On noticing it, I appealed to Acharya that it be corrected and the original notation restored. Vasudevacharya explained that the revised portion was aesthetically better and need not be changed. He advised us to stick to the "Vani" text. How great the Acharya was to say so.

My association with Suresh was in 1955 when I had the occasion to meet B. Nilakantan, then Plant Engineer in the ITI. He was associated with flute Mali. Later, I joined ITI at the instance of Nilakantan. Soon I became one in his family. B.N. Ramesh, Suresh's younger brother learnt mrudangam under me. From 1956, I had been so closely associated with that family that we were considered inseparables. The tonal quality of Suresh inspired me so much that I took him into my fold and introduced him to all accompanists of the day, violinists B. Vishwantha, A. Veerabhadriah, Anoor Ramakrishna, H.V. Krishnamurthy, R.R. Keshavamurthy, P. Bhuvanesh-wariah, mrudangists C.K. Ayyamani Iyer, M.L. Veerabhadriah, H.P. Ramachar, Munajunathan and others. Later Lalgudi Jayaraman, M.S. Gopalakrishnan, M. Chandrasekharan, V.V. Subramanyam provided violin support with my mrudangam. Palghat Mani Iyer consented and played for Suresh. It is very unfortunate that such a talented flautist should have met an untimely death.

I was residing at Chamarajapet till 1952. When my father expired my family moved to the Visweswarapuram residence of my elder sister, Paruvatham. My neighbour was C.K. Venkataramayya, then kannada translator to the Government. His son C.V. Nagaraj was a disciple of Ganakala Bhushana L. Raja Rao (veena) with whom I performed a series of concerts on mrudangam and either Rathnagiri Subha Shastry or H.R. Ramachandra Rao on violin in Government sponsored concerts named "Sanskriti Prasara" fostered by K. Hanumanthaiya, then Chief Minister, M. Shamanna, elder brother of my brother in law, M. Krishnaswamy was the Finance Secretary and those were days of turbulence over the construction of the Vidhana Soudha. Dr. H. Krishnamurthy, noted Eye Surgeon, living opposite us and his younger son was my disciple in

mrudangam. On the same road was "Raja Sree", pen name of K. Srinivasa Iyengar and Rajalakshmi Srinivasan who used to play veena duets with my accompaniment and I also used to guide them. Raja Sree was a columnist for several magazines and newspapers as a free-lancer. He later became the secretary of the Bangalore Gayana Samaja. Raja Sree's son Rajoo (K.S.S. Rajan, now heading the prestigious organisation "Sampradaya" in Madras) was under my training in mrudangam.

Down the road was an Ganasudhakara A. Subba Rao who used to visit us and we used to visit him often. It was at the residence of Raja Sri that I met the great Dwaram and we would discuss matters of music till late in the nights. I remember Dwaram invited me to join him and his daughter to a movie Madhumathi at Alankar. I was wondering how Dwaram, considered semi blind, could see a film. He had a special frame with suitable lenses for the purpose!

T.V. Gopalkrishnan, who was working in the AG's office in Madras was brought for mrudangam for the Gayana Samaja concert. Later TVG resigned his job and opted for a musical career. Dwaram used to write to me immediately he accepted any concert in Bangalore. He was very intimate and affectionate and I played with him in a number of concerts. I used to visit his residence in Madras at Triplicane and spend time in musical discussions.

An interesting anecdote of his concert at Shankariah Hall for the Gayana Samaja is worth the mention. B. Nilakantan wanted to record the recital of Dwaram and got the permission of V.T. Srinivasan. A Grundig spool recorder was used for taping the concert. It was surprising to Nilakantan when he was asked to pay Rs 12/- (Rs 4/- for two tickets for him and Suresh and Rs 4/- for the space occupied for the recorder which would have accommodated one per-

son)! That was the adherence to rules as per Srinivasan! Dwaram used to make very affectionate enquiries about Chowdiah with me with a request to convey his good wishes to Chowdiah.

The Andhra Government announced a State pension for life on Dwaram. I wrote to him congratulating him. I felt sad when AIR announced the demise of Dwaram. I was amazed to receive a post card thanking me for the letter which was received two days later.

1952 was the year when my upanayanam was performed, which several musicians attended. In the morning, flute Mali came and was having breakfast when Chowdiah entered and went away on seeing Mali in a highly jovial mood (Mali was in his elements). Later, Chowdiah came for lunch, confirming that Mali is not there! It was in that period from 1952 that I had unique occasion to meet great masters of music with Chowdiah.

Arcot Ramaswamy Mudaliar was the Dewan of Mysore State and a reception was held at his residence at the Carlton House in connection with the wedding of one of his relatives. Musiri Subramanya Iyer was scheduled to give a vocal recital with Chowdiah, Palghat Mani Iyer and

Manjunathan. Our landing at the Carlton House itself was unique. We were offered a car by the staff of the Dewan which Chowdiah politely refused, telling that he would come in his own car. The car just stopped after crossing the present Maharani's College, about 100 yards from the gate of Carlton House. We had to push it to the gate to the dismay of the Dewan's staff!

In the melodious recital of Musiri, a close relative of Mudaliar requested him to sing Mukhari. He felt embarrassed as Mukhari was considered inauspicious. When Chowdiah and Musiri were engaged in a hush hush discussion, Mudaliar came and enquired what the matter was. Chowdiah explained the request. Pat came the reply. "When Musiri sings nothing can be inauspicious; let him sing," Musiri elaborated the raga and the krithi, "Shiva Kaama Sundari" of Sivan with a detailed neraval. The audience was thrilled and everyone wondered how such a raga could be associated with inauspiciousness!

Musiri's rendering of Thodi and the krithi "Thaye Yashodha" and the elaborate sahitya vinyasa for "Kaalini Chilambu" are fresh in my memory. I requested Musiri to attend a flute recital of B.N. Suresh in Madras in

1957. He wrote appreciating the melodic appeal and advised not to fritter away his energies in "kanakku-vyavahaara", but to concentrate on raga bhava. Musiri was well educated and had good administrative capabilities which could be gauged from his services as the secretary of the Thyagabrahma Sangeetha Sabha, Tiruvaiyaru and later at the Government Music College, Madras.

Flute Mali (T.R. Mahalingam) was a genius to be remembered for his elevation of flute to the present day state of art. I did have one occasion to play with Palladam Sanjeeva Rao whose rendition was unique for the paataanthara of those days. More of straight notes and it was Mali who exposed that quarter-tones and micro-tones could be produced on this bamboo instrument. Using the cross-fingering techniques which was his contribution to the flautine art, he could produce subtle gamakas without straying into 'anya swaras'. His use of such graceful notes with 'anushwas' marked a new trail in this branch of art. But his mono-tonal travels indulging himself in kanakku-vyavahara, many a time would test the patience of even his admirers.

To be concluded

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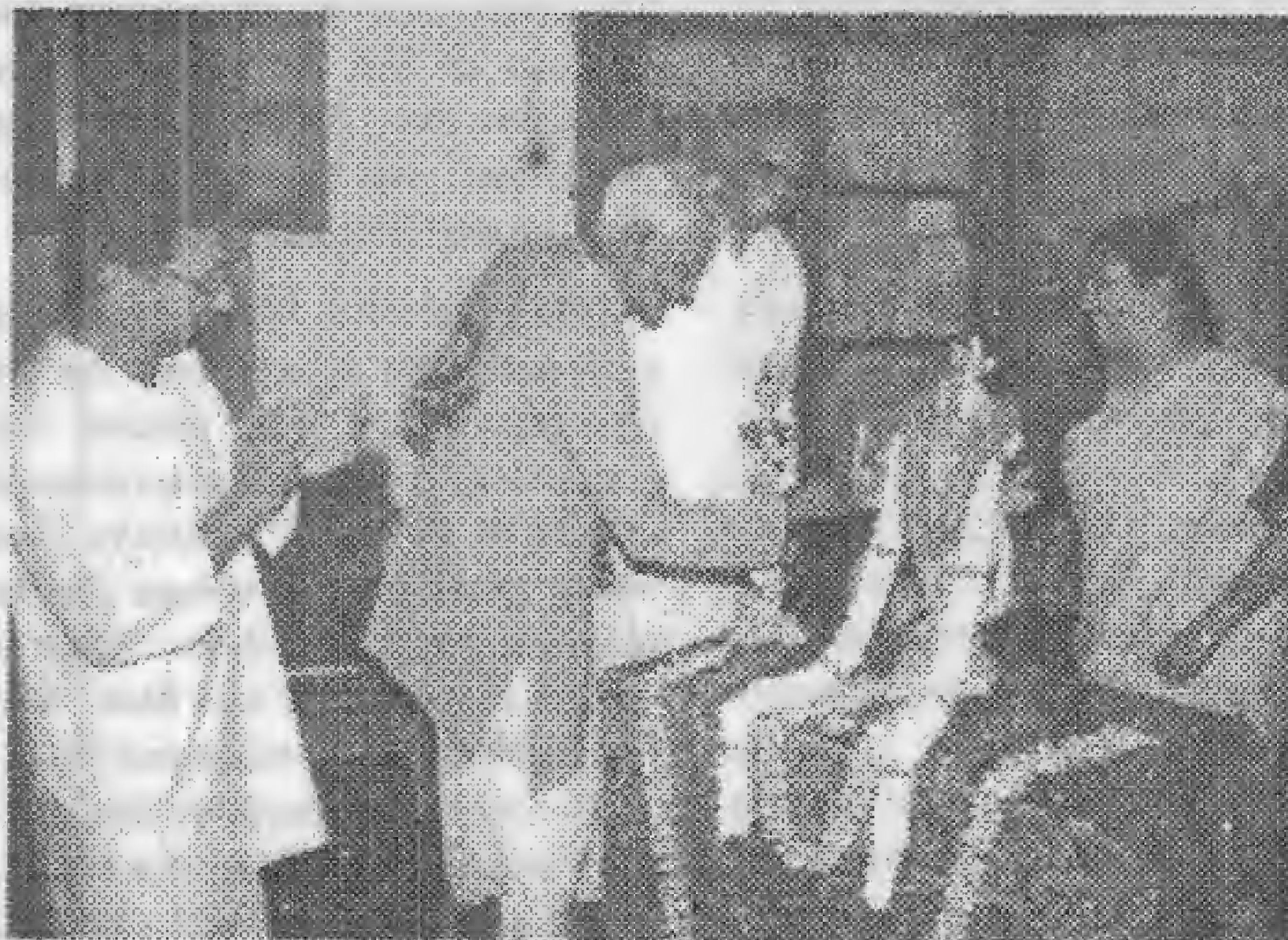
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Several Aspirants to the Fore in KRISHNOTSAVA



A five day Krishnotsava Music festival was organised by the Youth Forum of the Percussive Arts Centre (PAC) and the Gokhale Institute of Public Affairs (GIPA) at the latter's auditorium, Bangalore from Septem-

ber 7, 96. V. Krishnan, General Manager (Commercial) ITI and founder President of Parthasarathy Swamy Sabha inaugurating the festival appreciated the activities of the forum. Justice Nittoor Sreenivasa Rau

presided.

The inaugural concert was a melodious flute recital by young A.P. Sarvotham, accompanied by Jyothsna Manjunath (violin), T.N. Ramesh (mridangam) and A.S. Kumar (kanjira).

Sarvotham's alapana of Reethigowla and Hemavathi was emotive. 'Namakusuma' in Sree was a welcome addition, rarely heard these days. He could have chosen at least one major piece on Lord Krishna to suit the occasion. Ramesh was good in his mridangam support while Kumar on kanjira appeared promising.

Salem S. Vijayaraghavachariar Memorial concert next day endowed by his son V. Krishnan of Parthasarathy Swamy Sabha was rendered by another young vocalist V. Shankaranarayan of Madras. He was accompanied by Prema (violin), B.R. Srinivas (mridangam) and G. Omkar (morching). 'Nannu Brovu Lalitha' (Lalitha), 'Samajavara' (Hindola), 'Rara Rajeevalochana' (Mohana) were rendered. His detailed alapana of Kambodhi and 'Yadava Nee Baa' re-

vealed his latent potentialities as a promising vocalist. Srinivas and Omkar provided lively percussion support. Neela Ramgopal was the chief guest.

The Meena Nagarajan Memorial Endowment concert on September 8, endowed by N. Nagarajan and Kumari Lakshmi was an experimental concert. The programme 'Voice and the Veena' was directed by Karaikudi S. Subramanian, Director,

Brhaddhwani, a research and training





centre for music of the world, Madras. Veena by Subramanian was played as an extension and a complement to the voice by Sankari Krishnan, supported by K.S. Sudhaman (mridangam). While veena was known as an accompaniment for vocal music, with the advent of the violin, veena cannot be claimed as ideal in view of the absence of violin's continuity of nada. Sankari Krishnan proved her credentials as a promising vocalist with perfect sense of sruthi and laya. Subramanian is a follower of the Karaikudi tradition and established as a vainika with high

musical attainments. The perfect laya koraippus in their pallavi in Shan-karabharana proved their laya sensibilities with a touch of Lalgudi, who has trained Sankari Krishnan. Sudhaman gave lively support on mridangam. 'Janani' in Reethigowla, 'Seshachalanayakam' in Varali were the other items worthy of mention. Veena maestro V. Dore-swamy Iyengar was the chief guest.

Sreekantham Nagendra Sastry in his recital on September 10 exhibited highly promising talent with a power-

ful voice. Veena Kuppa Iyer's krithis 'Pagavari' (Atana) and 'Sadaa Neepadame' (Devamanohari), pieces not heard often, presented neatly. His raga, thana and pallavi in Kambodhi with thrakala and thrishra from 'Arudhi' were neatly executed. Charulatha on violin was melodious and supportive. N.S. Mahesh and S. Prashanth gave neat mridangam and kanjira support. R.K. Padmanabha was the chief guest.

The concluding recital, M. Krishnaswamy Memorial Endowment donated by Parvathy Krishnaswamy was by Sreevardhini accompanied by A.P. Srivatsa (violin), Maheshwara Sastry (mridanga) and Narayana-murthy (ghata). She rendered 'Sri Venugopala (Kuranji) and a new krithi 'Devaki Nandana' (Hemavathi) set to Khanda Triputa, composed by her mother, T.S. Vasanthamadhavi. Sreevardhini's concert reflected an upward trend. But the thamboora drone left much in wanting. A.P. Srivatsa on violin provided a melodious and tuneful support. A. Veerabhadriah was the chief guest.

Altogether the festival provided opportunities to several young aspirants. ♦

Bangalore K Venkatram



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The Editor, PHOENIX, 138, 5th Cross, Gandhinagar, Bangalore 560009, before the first week of the month.

Calling AIR

Parainapavana Rama, the Purvikalyani masterpiece of Pooch Srinivasa Iyengar was a hot favourite of old-timers, the kriti's structure itself making for an authoritative alapana. But H.T. Ramaswamy's alap for the raga (Aug 2, 8:30 a.m.) fell short in its gestalt. However, in his airing of the kriti proper, Ramaswamy succeeded in highlighting its emotional overtones, some slips in the 'swara' korvais notwithstanding.

The veena recital of B.R. Pundalikavalli (9:30 a.m. same day) was less satisfactory on both the counts. Even a weighty piece like Samajavaragamana (Hindola) was not free from slips, slips that persisted in the alap for Simhendramadhyama that followed. One couldn't find fault with the form, but the delineation betrayed a mediocre key. The rendition of the

kriti Ninne Nammiti did improve the imagery, but not strong enough to sustain. The only impression that C.K. Tara, an old favourite of many a



R.K. Suryanarayana

musical feature from the Bangalore AIR in the fifties left is that her voice has lost its timbre (Aug 3, 8:30 a.m.). Her best is far behind her, the present form so dismal that her reputation could be at stake!

The National Programme the same day featured a sitar recital by Manilal Nag. From the initial notes of Miya-Malhar it was evident that he was striving for instant likeability. The alap at once acquired a special delight, the flashy Jod-Jhala creating a variety of musical figures. Bageshri was more impactful in its elan, a reposeful 'gat' ambling gracefully and naturally to lure the listener along. It was music that was at once primal and cerebral.

It was a rather familiar piece in Nata that M. Manjunath chose to open his concert at 10:10 a.m. next morning. But what a graceful impact he

made with it. His brief profile of Hindola was as evocative, providing a springboard for the kriti Manasuloni. It was music that evoked surges of optimism in the listener, a blissful feeling which swept the listener as Manju aired Simhendramadhyama for a sonorous Ninne Nammiti. The fingering was so crystallised that the lyrical feel of the words was inescapable.

H.K. Narayana next morning (8:30 a.m.) seemed more composed than usual when he intoned Chakravaka (Namanavi). It was a fine start, the elaborate alap for Vasantha (Devirame) growing into an authoritative representation of the melody. Anuradha Madhusudan on her veena (9:30 a.m. same day) found herself in a similar upbeat mood.

Devadideva (Mayamalavagoula) gave Anuradha enough scope to weave instrumental arabesques of rich variety. A good start, but one which did not sustain as



M. Manjunath



Anuradha Madhusudan

**Geetha Ramanand**

effectively in Shanmukhapriya. The alap itself was not free from slips, though the kriti Marivere Dikku was reassuring. There is no doubt of her growing confidence.

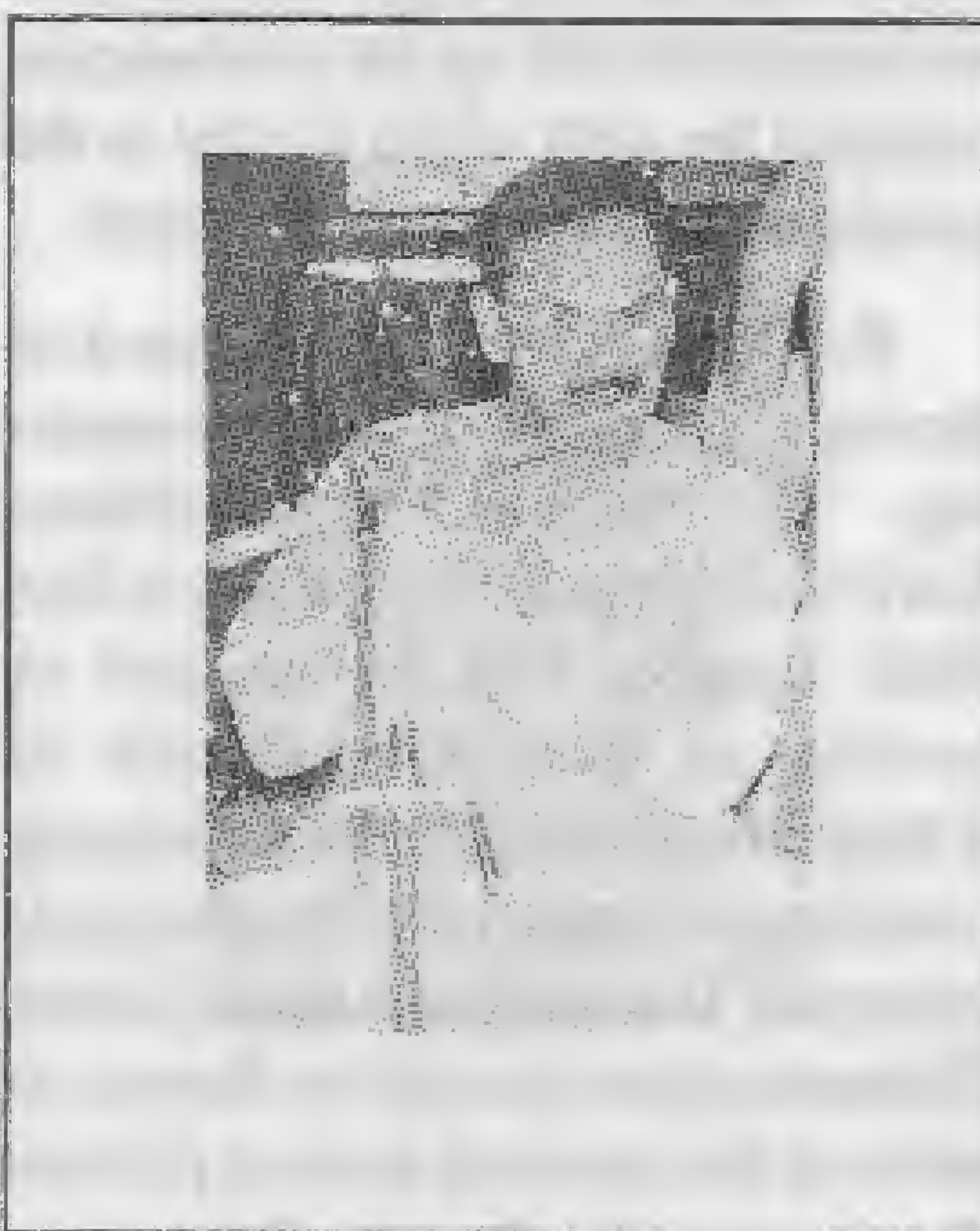
As a total musical experience, nothing could have been more enduring than the Kalyani (Shivakama Sundari) of R.N. Doreswamy on the veena (Aug 6, 8:30 a.m.). The alap was not overly elaborate, but flowed with resonant exactitude. The imposing Kriti, was embellished with a flurry of niraval and trenchant 'swaraprasthara'. A touch of mastery of the senior Vainika over the mood and mode was unmistakable.

Next day at 9:30 p.m., it was another soulfilling veena recital. The artiste was R.K. Suryanarayana who in the right mood could be elevating. It was a rare "Dasha Ragamalika", with the dignified Shankarabharana as the base. The alap itself was an affirmation of his creative propensity, the 'thanam' flowing with resonant overtones. The Adi tala Pallavi "Sarasadala Nayana Krishna" was as effusive in its elucidation, to leave a pleasing impact. The ragas involved in the package were all familiar melodies, etched with glowing cadences.

G. Varadarangan's vocal recital (Aug 9:25 a.m.) was solid in its exper-

tise. Whether it was the rendition of Sudamayi (Amritavarshini) or the alap for Shree (Sri Varalakshmi), his vocalism was marked for its melodic vision, though his tonal flourishes seemingly drew their inspiration from elsewhere. P. Rama who went on the air at 8:30 a.m. next day revealed a range of voice that flits in 'tara sthayi' with ease. Her alap for Hamsanandi straightaway made a mark with her accomplishments, the trite 'sruti bheda' enriching its sensitivity. Nidumahima, the lovely kriti which has almost disappeared from the concert stage, was intoned in style, some dainty 'swara' passages enlivening the portrayal. The Kanada number was effusive in its structural expanse. Overall, the sonority in Rama's birga-filled voice adds to the lingering effects.

The National Programme on Aug 10 featured an old recording of a vocal recital of T. Brinda, the right way to pay homage to a veteran who had passed away earlier in the month. And as one listened to the choice selection starting with an ode to Thyagaraja (Goula) and the wholesome alap for Bhairavi (Chintayamam), it was easy to recognise the vintage style, a style which is marked for its emotional appeal. Whether it is the Dhatu or Maatu, a distinct tonal effusion characterised it. The alap for Shankarabharana (Sri Dakshinamurthe) and Purvikalyani (Sri Meenakshim) were redolent with

**T.R. Srinath****V.K. Raman**

an old-world charm about him, the steady, unhurried pace that felicitating the unfoldment of the lyrical grandeur of the tested compositions. The concert itself left a devout feeling in the mind of the listener.

It was the same Purvikalyani that was intoned by S.G. Bhagyalakshmi (Aug 12, 8:30 a.m.). But what a contrast in its fleeting feeling! The 'devaranama' Manava Janma that exemplified the raga, however, was not wanting in its lyrical fecundity. That was the saving grace in her singing.

The veena recital of veteran M.J. Srinivasa Iyengar (Aug 16, 8:30 a.m.) was a real treat, standing out for its technical aplomb. His alap for Kambodi was almost a model for a study in melodic finesse, all the familiar endearments of the raga coaxed into the aural frame. The stately Thyagaiah Kriti Sri Raghuvaraprameya embellished with measured 'swaraprasthara' made for instant edification. It was a memorable recital.

Rupa Sridhar (Aug 17, 8:30 a.m.) does not appear to be a familiar name in the circuit. She is endowed with a cultivated voice as reflected in the reposeful alap for Simhendramadhyam. Anandabhairavi was equally appealing. Yet the kritis Kamakshi and Kamala-Komala respectively

seemed to lack warmth. The veena recital of R.Saraswati (Aug 20, 9:25 a.m.) could not make any better impress. Her alap for Bilahari was rather commonplace, though Paridana, the kriti had a rollicking gait.

One noteworthy feature in the new crop of artistes in this part of the country, is the emergence of many talented flutists among whom V.K.Raman seems to have won instant popularity. His concert (Aug.21, 8:30 a.m.) was as reassuring as ever. The alap for Anandabhairavi saw him in an ebullient mood. He invested the familiar kriti Marivere with the right amount of melodic fervour. But his essay for Sunandavinodini (Devadi Deva) could not rise to expected heights, falling short in its aesthetic charm.

His senior colleague Gita Ramanand in her veena recital same day at 9:30 p.m was certainly in a better frame of mind as could be made from the effervescent glow that marked the opening number in Mayamala-vagoula. Nenarunchi (Malavi) sparkled as effectively to serve as a prelude to an evocative Behag (Bhavayaham). Kalyani revealed her firm hold on the idiom, the alap itself decorated with a flurry of lilting 'sangatis'. A perfunctory 'thanam' preceded the easy paced Pallavi (Taraka Brahma Swaroopini), the rhythmic forays acquiring a special delight, a disposition in which V.S. Rajgopal on the mridangam and Sukanya Ramgopal on the ghatam linked the laya with consummate skill and felicity.

The Sriranjini number by P.S. Satyavati (Aug 22, 9:25 a.m) was just passable, the seasoned singer not finding herself in her elements. Rajasri Josyar, next morning at 8:30 also seemed shaky as she started her concert with the imposing Hiranmayeem (Lalitha). But she soon warmed up as the 'swara' passages revealed. They swelled up into a convincing representation of the melody. Her alap for Vachaspati (Kantahudu) was as lucidly articulated to rise the recital to a

different plane.

The succinct, reposeful alap for Kambodi by T.V.Ramprasad (Aug.24, 8:30 a.m.) was impressive, fluently arriving at a homogeneous structure. The weighty piece O Rangashayi rein-



forced the trust of his fans as a promising talent. The measured 'swaraprasthara' enriched the raga's modal felicity.

The Bilahari number which was the highlight of T.R. Srinath's flute recital (Aug 25, 8:30 a.m) was a study in melodic exactitude. The brooding excursion through the raga's endearing nooks enhanced its aural elegance. S. Seshagiri Rao who gave Srinath violin support and Arjun Kumar who accompanied him on the mridangam, matched the skill of the flautist in the unfoldment of the structural depth.

R.S.Ramakanth was featured in the major slot at 10:10 the same morning. The Vasanta Varnam (Ninnu Kori) itself showed that he was in fine fettle, inspired with the prospect of having an experienced trio in B.Raghuram (violin), M.S.Ramaiah (mridangam) and B.N.Chandramouli (ghatam). It was a bright start. Huseni (Ramachandra) showed his fluency to arrive at the intended musical picture. But it was the alap for Ramapriya (Samodam) which really brought his

accomplishments to the fore. It was a robust rendition, the lyrical elegance of the composition receiving its due emphasis. It is also true that the seasoned accompanists lent Ramakanth splendid support, every minute of which he exploited to heighten the intensity of his vocal presence.

But the vocal recital by M.P. Harihara Iyer (Aug 26, 9:30) fell short in its sustaining quality. Manasaetulo (Malayamarutha) no doubt gave him a good start. But the 'swaraprasthara' attended to it was rather prosaic, falling short in resonance. Bilahari (Paridana) was less inspiring in its elucidation, the 'swara' passages again making one feel as if they were not memorised.

But M.D.Nanjundaswamy (Aug 27, 8:30 a.m) was made of a more solid stuff. His alap for Shanmukhapriya (Velli Nayakane) was marked for his fluency of style, the kriti itself not short in its lyrical graces. Lucid 'gamaks' and a trite layakari were the other noteworthy features in his recital.

Later at 9:15 a.m the same day, it was Vasantha Ramanujam who was on the air. Her delineation for Kalyani was methodical, a blend into the bhakti-laden kriti Shivepahimam which was rendered with fervour. A greater degree of voice modulation in the upper reaches could have made the aural impact more soothing. Nalina Mohan's violin support, coupled with M.A. Krishnamurthy on the mridangam and Purushotham on ghatam shared the honours to help vocalist to arrive at a homogeneous aural edifice. But H.S.Mahalakshmi (Aug 30, 8:30 a.m.) failed to make her customary impact, an unsteady 'sruti' robbing the elegance of even an imposing melody like Lalitha (Nannubrova Lalithe). Though age has told on her aural capabilities, there is no doubt that her musical spirits are very much in fettle and should stand in good stead sooner than later.

ESSENCE

Tuneful Encounters-9

Coastal Colossus

S.N.Sivaswamy

I have seen neither Gokarna nor Mrurudeshwar, both hallowed places of worship on our coast. But I have had the immense pleasure of knowing two highly accomplished musicians hailing respectively from these two places. Ramesh Nadkarni belonged to Gokarna and Devendra Murudeshwar to Murudeshwar.

I know that both of them had been working for many years in the music department of All India Radio at various stations. I was posted in Bombay as Deputy Director of Sales in the commercial Broadcasting Service and my office was located in the same building as AIR in Churchgate Reclamation, when I first met Ramesh Nadkarni in the company of Devendra Murudeshwar.

It is amazing how the magic of sharing a mother tongue pulls together total strangers. Yes, the two musicians had been total strangers to me till I moved into my Bombay office. Of course, I had heard the vocal music programmes of Ramesh Nadkarni and the flute recital of Devendra Murudeshwar many a time on the radio. Perhaps they too had heard of a Kannada officer of my name working in their organisation.

However, it was at the tea centre being run by the Government Tea Board near the Churchgate railway station that I heard them speaking to each other in Kannada. I introduced myself to them in Kannada and was delighted when they responded in chorus "of course, we know you!"

It seems they had been wanting to come to my office and say "hello" to me. But they were not sure whether I would be any different from other officers of my rank in Delhi and

Bombay who knew nothing about music but nevertheless rode the high horse and kept themselves behaving as though they belonged to a much superior human species!

All such imaginary barriers collapsed once we started talking in Kannada and exchanged views on subjects widely ranging between the patronage of the Mysore Palace and the Vachanagana of Mallikarjun Mansoor.

Ramesh Nadkarni, who passed away last year, was a highly dedicated musician, a disciple of Aman Ali Khan of the Bhendi Bazar gharana of Bombay, a style of singing with its own distinctive grammar, notable for its intricate swara patterns. There was only a handful of exponents of the gharana left after the expiry of Aman Ali Khan in the fifties, and Ramesh was the finest practitioner of that school of singing at the time. He was not only a great musician, but an unassuming and quiet gentleman, soft spoken, friendly and helpful by nature.

An additional quality that drew this gaunt, bespectacled Giant closer to me was his love for Carnatic music. He could speak with authority on Purandara Dasa and other southern composers. He himself had vastly contributed to the popularisation of devaranamas in Bombay.

Although I knew from chats with him that Ramesh Nadkarni liked Carnatic music, I was pleasantly surprised to find him squatting with me one evening at a chamber concert of Palghat K.V.Narayana Swamy at the National Centre for Performing Arts in the premises of the centre in Nariman Point. Narayana Swamy was in good form those days and gave us a

most enchanting recital. Ramesh was obviously enjoying every minute of it, but I became aware of the depth of his perception of true musical values, with no trace of prejudice about Carnatic music, when he swayed ecstatically to the strains of the immortal composition of Muthuswamy Dikshitar in Samaraga "Annapurna Visalakshi, Akhila Bhuvana Sakshi". He kept mumbling the refrain long after we had left the hall.

Even today I remember Ramesh Nadkarni's benign and smiling face as he remarked "Oh! What a beautiful song, so beautifully sung!" ■

Ring, Silver Mridangam and the Writer

The intro of a music review in an English daily mentioned about a couple presenting a gold ring and a silver mridangam to the awardee at a function held recently at Bangalore.

That this statement does not form a music review is a different matter and it is for the editor of this reputed newspaper to decide.

But the fact missed by the knowledgeable reviewer is that the silver mridangam (costing about Rs 15000-00) was contribution of many of the awardee's close friends and the couple had not contributed anything except posing with the mridangam.

"Pallavi may be called the crest jewel of Carnatic music—manodharma, creative talents, command over rhythm, skill and imagination in portraying the various facets of the raga and above all his intelligence.

N. Ramiah

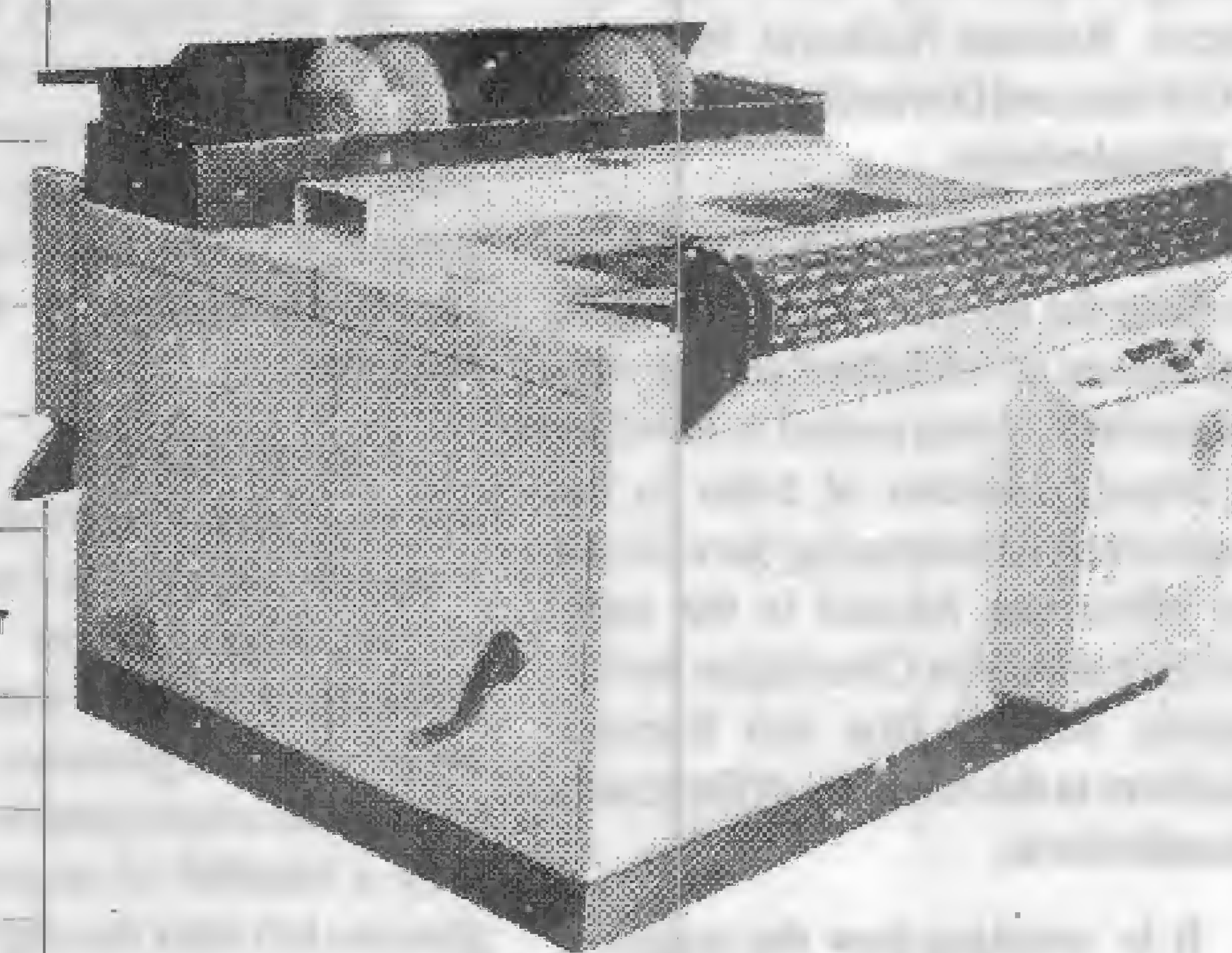
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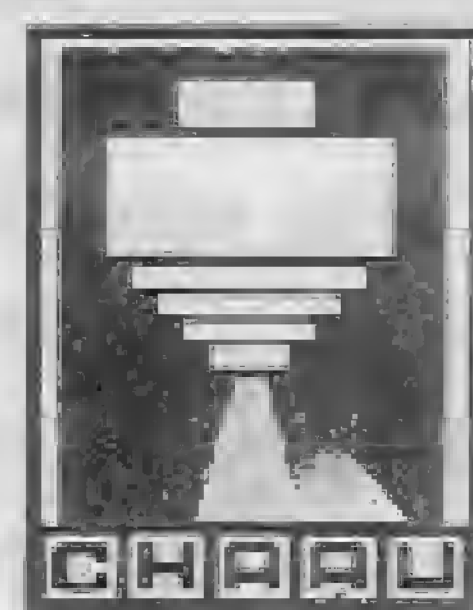
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IN LIGHTER VEIN

Instant Culture

Manu Vijay

While 'Quicker' and 'Faster' may be the buzz words for commerce and industry, the virus of the 21st century, seems to have also bitten the dance arena. Dancers are now required to churn out numbers racier than rap and reggae to meet the demands of yuppie audiences.

Shorter, quicker numbers, set to foot tapping, hip-swinging rhythms, shorter performances in pocket hanky sized stages for small, select audiences seem to be the corporate requirements. Dish out continental fare-a touch of the traditional, a dash of a group, a tea spoonful of folk and a pint of the contemporary, with com-

mentaries that read like the morning newspaper, and rake in barrellful of greenbacks to take home.

I think, we can safely assume that the 'instant' culture has come home to stay. Packaging and marketing are of prime importance - the glossier the better. The programme should be done, before our audience can spell and pronounce S-h-a-n-k-a-r-a-bha-r-a-n-a-m. The aftermath, with dinner and cocktails go on to the wee hours of the morning, but all's well that has good P.R. !

The latest stuff that seems to be lining the shelves, next to our usual MTR rava idly mix and ORKAY in-

stant jamun, is our own 'dhideer' version of Indian dance. Don't be surprised, while sauntering into Ahmed Bazaar, if you bump into a rack of 'Learn Bharathanatyam in 30 days' disks. I do remember audio cassettes of one complete marga being available for anyone who would like to have one at home and have a go at a tisra alaripu, but computer disks to teach adavus is dragging it a bit much. Couple the above features with a dictionary of dance vocabulary, and ready made costumes available in S.M.L and XL sizes (is Ayyelu listening ?) and viva ! You have a dancer !

Soon, all you have to do is hook yourself on to the internet, and along with a Kenyan safari and the latest situation in Bosnia, you can learn the numbers choreographed by Guru so and so on his trip to Australia. Sounding cynical ? Not at all - if you can acquire a husband while channel surfing on the internet, can you not learn Bharathanatyam ? ■

Rich Musical Fare by Nakod Brothers



From L to R : Viswanath Nakod, Arjun Nakod
and Balachandra Nakod

Pandit Arjuna Nakod, the well-known Hindustani musician and drama artiste of yesteryears, must justly be proud of his four talented sons who are amongst the top-ranking musicians of Karnataka today. The

impressive performance of the Nakod brothers for the Bangalore Art Circle at the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan on September 12 was an eloquent testimony to their achievements.

The programme started with Ranga Geetegalu, comprising drama songs rendered by Arjuna during his 30-year career as a theatre artiste. These nostalgic songs in classical mould were rendered with telling effect by Balachandra Nakod, an A Grade artiste in the AIR. His rich tonality made an indelible impact on the listeners.

The trio started for a bandish in Teental with Peshkar followed by chaturasya, khanda tishra and mishra beats. Later the brothers played the Kaydas of Delhi, Farookabad and Ajarada Gharanas and some of their own Kelas extended to the Nadas of temple bells.

The varieties of Nadas made the audience feel like dancing. They ended with Puray Gharana varieties of Gait, Chakradhars while rendering Bols with gay abandon.

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*Produced by Sharada Kala Kendra,
Bangalore - 78, Price Rs.30/-.*

The volume number denotes that there have already been 18 such cassettes, covering a wide array of Vasudevachar compositions. As indicated by R.K.Padmanabha, Director of the Kala Kendra, the proposal is to complete 20 cassettes, the project having started around 1992.

It is indeed a remarkable achievement, something not given even to the great Trinity! It is almost for the first time in the annals of the history of music that such a vast selection of

songs of a single composer is made available in audio to the community. That the songs in these cassettes are separately reduced to notation and brought out in book form as a compendium enhances their usefulness to singers and students alike. No compliment would be too big to the joint efforts of Padmanabha and S.Krishnamurthy, the worthy grandson of the maestro who has lent his unstinted support in this venture.

Equally noteworthy is the fact that the rendition of each set is by a different vocalist, each a name to reckon with. Care has also been taken to select the songs for the sets in such a way that each can easily comprise a concert by itself.

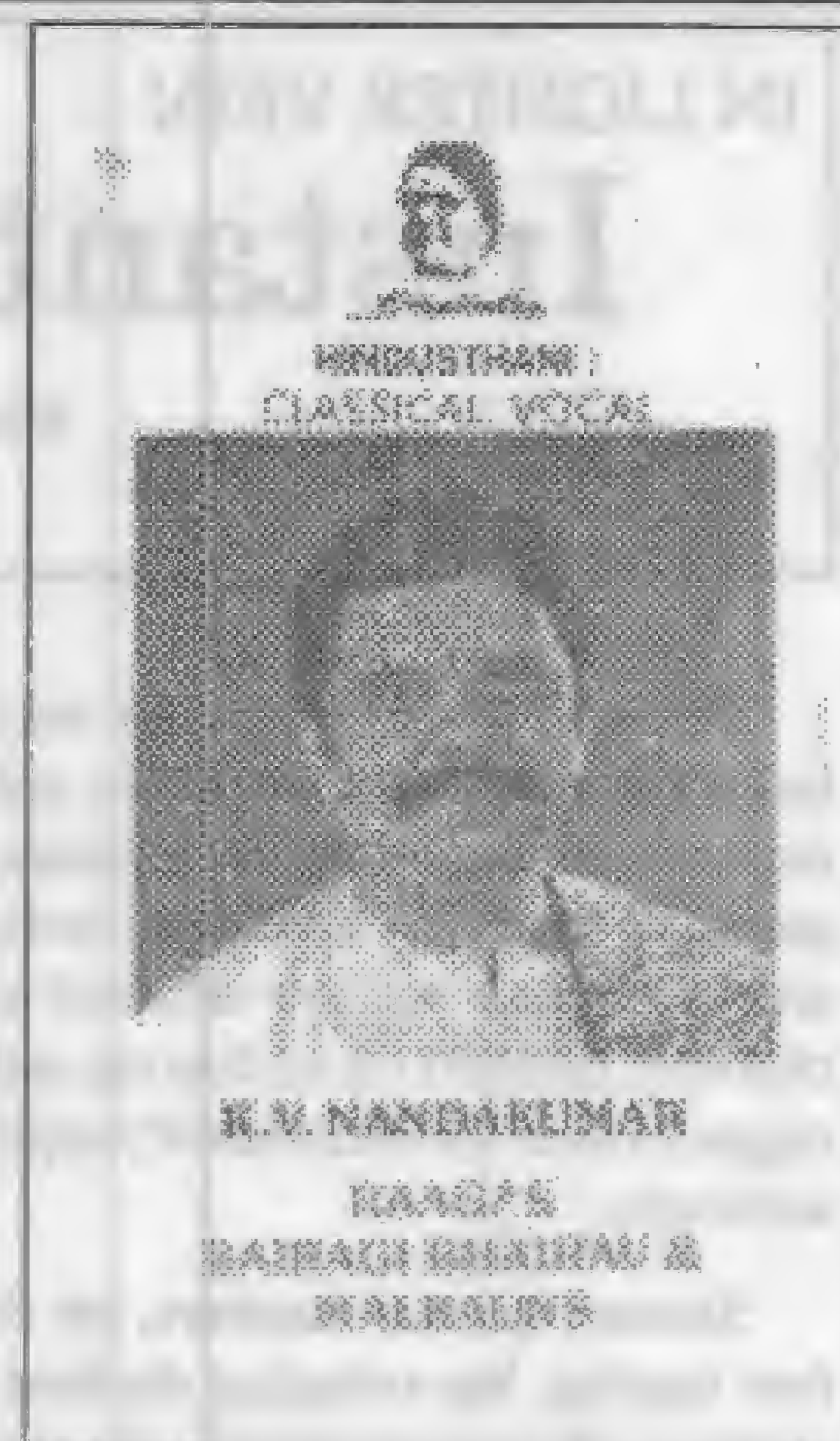
The set under review is assigned to S.Shankar, the second in the series so far as he is concerned. It starts with a Varnam in Ramapriya, followed by six other loveable compositions. Of the ragas, Shankarabharana receives a detailed alap, prelude to "Damodaramanisham", not heard much on the concert platform.

B.Raghuram (violin), N.Vasudev (mridangam) and R.A.Rajagopalan (ghata), accompanying the artiste make their presence felt by their controlled artistry. The cassette, as in the case of its 18 predecessors was released in a simple, but impressive function on Sept.29, 1996.

K.V.Nandakumar

HINDUSTANI VOCAL. By.
*K.V.Nandakumar. Cassette. Shree
Matha G-11 (Sarovar Apartments,
Basavanagudi, Bangalore - 560 004)
for Sangeeta Sagar, 95R102. Price
Rs.50/-.*

Vocalist Nandakumar is gifted with a rich and sonorous voice honed to 'sruti'. He has endeared himself to listeners by his sincere efforts to evoke emotional depth in his singing. As evidenced in Bairagi Bhairav and



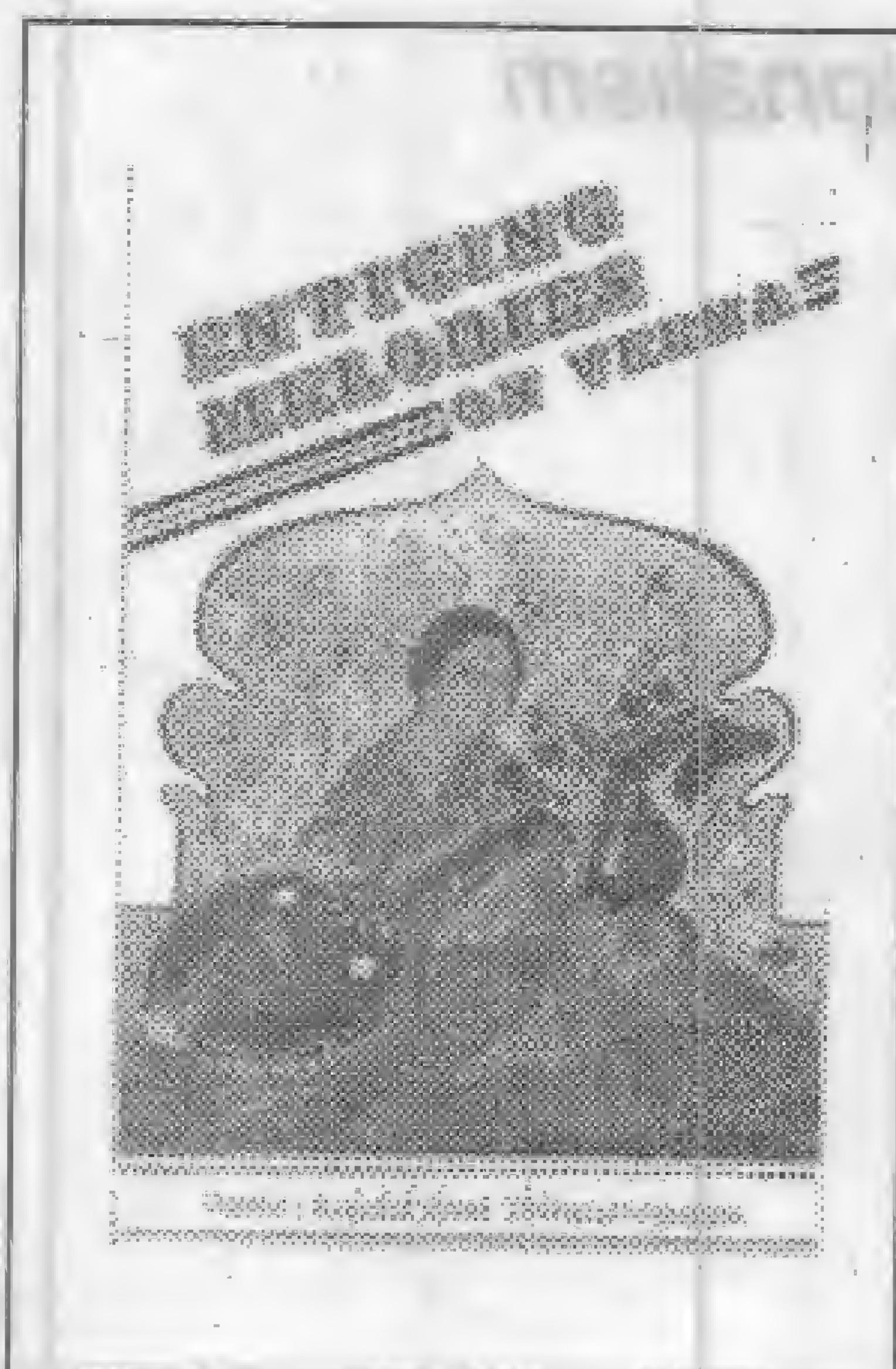
Malkouns, the two pentatonic ragas he has recorded for this cassette, he strives to achieve melodic richness by the judicious use of chiselled taans, sweet gamaks and enduring murkis. There is perfect balancing between the melodic and rhythmic aspects of music, a task which has been made easier for him by the understanding support he receives from Vyasamurthi Katti on the harmonium and M.Nagaraj on the tabala.

Enticing Melodes on Veena

**ENTICING MELODIES ON
VEENA: By Rajalakshmi Tirunara-
yanan in a cassette for Kanakagiri
Prakashana of Malathi Madhavachar
(1377, XIII Main / X Cross, BTM II
Stage, Bangalore - 560076. Price 35/-**

Though Rajalakshmi, former Head of the Department of Dance, Drama and Music in the Bangalore University is a seasoned artiste, this is the first cassette she has to her credit. Obviously, quite a stranger to cadging!

Tinged with a touch of majesty, she starts the rendition with the popular Pada Varnam of Lalgudi G.Jayaraman in Charukeshi (Innum Enmanam) which has become popular with Bharathanatyam dancers all



over. The evocation of its euphonic elegance is a fine prelude to an impressive selection of ditties in Nata, Simhendramadhyama, Shankarabhara and Hindustani Kapi. The presentation stands out for fidelity of form and gentle 'meetu'. It is pleasant listening.

M.A.Krishnamurthy on the mridangam and R.A.Rajagopalan on the ghatam have provided competent rhythmic support to the noted vainika.

Flute

FLUTE by H.S.Venugopal for Pranava Live Cassettes, 200, East Park Road, XII Cross, Malleswaram, Bangalore - 560 003. Price Rs.30/-.

A perusal at the list of accompanists, at once reveals the flutist's affinity with the world of Bharathanatyam. Percussionists G.Gurumurthy (mridangam) and



S.V.Balakrishna (morsing) as also K.R.V.Pulikeshi as having providing assistance, are names heard more on the dance stage than in concert halls. But Raghuram (violin) and Srishaila (ghatam) are not as familiar with dancers.

Yet all of them combine well to enhance the sonority of Venugopal's flute recital. Even otherwise, the playing is free from jarring notes and marked for controlled tonal quality. The familiar Abhogi varnam (Evari Boda) makes for a steady start. Among the other pieces Purvikalyani (Gnanamosagarada) and Hindola (samajavaragamana) are catchy. A good effort for a first attempt.

S N C

A Gala Decennial

As many as six dance features and two solo Bharatanatyam recitals were featured in the Nrityanjali cum Rockfest 96 to mark the decennial celebrations of Sri Lalithakala Academy Trust of Mysore at the local Kala Mandira in the last week of July. The annual festival which was blessed

by the celebrated Rukmini Devi Arundale with the immortal dance-drama series of Kalakshetra 20 years ago, was inaugurated by R. Venkatraman, former President of India.

Two well-choreographed features on Ramayana (based on Swati Tirunal's Bhavayami Raghuramam) and Bhagavatam (episodes based on the compositions of Purandara Dasa and Kanaka Dasa) of Academy Director, Uma Rao gave a flying start to the gala fare. The pieces were greatly appreciated by a receptive audience, the team of experienced dancers giving a good account of their attainments.

Bharatanjali of B. Bhanumati of Bangalore, Damayanti Swayamvaram of Krishnaveni Lakshmanan of Madras, Annamaiah of Parvati Ghantasala and those of Revati Muthuswamy of Srirangam and Jayashri Narayanan of Pondicherry were other dance features. Lalitha and Vrinda Nanavati from Bangalore were the soloists.

The suffix Rockfest is in recognition of the memorable Festival of Karnataka organised by the Rasika Ranjana Sabha of Tiruchirappally in collaboration with the Academy in 1995. Since then there has been a healthy exchange of cultural ties between the two cities.

The Academy, like in the past, took the opportunity to felicitate several eminent personalities serving the cause of music and dance including Sharada Hoffman, Professor of Dance, Kalakshetra; N. Pattabhiraman of Sruti, Madras; R. Yagnaraman of Krishna Gana Sabha, Madras; vocalist R.K. Padmanabha of Bangalore and S.V. Narayanaswamy Rao of Sri Ramaseva Mandali, Bangalore.

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Natya Niketan Creates a Record



Deepa Narasimhan

Natya Niketan of Revathi Narasimhan has the rare distinction of scoring four ranks in the examination of the Karnataka Higher Secondary Examination Board (Bharathanatyam) this year. A brief note on each of these proud alumni of the Basavangudi school is given below:

Manjula Kumar (Vidwat I rank), daughter of Jayalakshmi Kumar and the late S.Kumar was initiated into Bharathanatyam by Shymala Muralikrishna of Nritya Prakasha Varshini. She performed her 'ranga pravesha' in 1992.

Later she came under the tutelage of Revathi, passing her Vidwat in I rank. Besides taking part in the several dance-dramas produced by her gurus, Manjula has appeared in solo for well-known organisations like Suchitra, Natyanjali Festival of Chidambaram, Dasara Festival at Kulu (H.P), Ravindra Bharathi, Hyderabad, Kannada Sangha, Aurangabad.

Jaganmohan Palace, Mysore etc. She has also won several prizes in competitions, including that of Aryabhata Cultural organisation.

Sankhya S. Puranik, daughter of S.D. Puranik, is another student of Revathi who has secured I rank in vidwat. A graduate of choreography (I class), she has passed the junior grade in music and has been undergoing training in Kathak.

Sankhya has taken part in the several dance features of Natya Niketana like Navajeevana and Navaratna Malike for the TV, Vitthala Charite, Natyotsava at Hampi and Pattadakal, Vijayanagara Vaibhava at Madras, Vijayakalyana, Bombay, and Karnatakotsava, Dharwad. Her solo appearances include those for Abhinava Art Centre, and those of the Shivakami group. Sankhya has also choreographed a few ballets on mythological themes.

Deepa Narasimhan who has secured a III rank in Vidwat, is the daughter of Guru Revathi and K.Y.Narasimhan. She is a final year



L.S.Prakruthi



Manjula Kumar

B.E.student, though manages to find time for dance.

Deepa had her 'ranga pravesha' in May 1994 and since then regularly taking part in solo and group dances of her mother's dance school. They include several dance-dramas for TV, Tyaga Brahma Gana Sabha, and Nungumbakam, Cultural Association, Madras, etc. Her solos include the Every Friday Cultural Evening, the Indian Institute of World Culture, Pallavotsava, Mysore and the Lasya-Ranjani dance festival.

L.S.Prakruthi, daughter of L.V. Sriranga Raju, has secured a II rank in the Senior Grade this year. She is a first year PUC student.

Though she has been learning the art for nearly 10 years, Prakruthi has not yet performed her 'ranga pravesha'. But she has rich experience on the stage, having taken part in several performances of Natya Niketan like the Shivali festival, features on Dashavatara, Purandara Dasa, etc.

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From Here and There

Mumbai Beat

Artistes Honoured

Bandup Fine Arts, Mumbai presented its 1996 awards to artistes for their contribution to Carnatic music on the evening of September 14, 96 at the Bright High School, Bandup (W).

Gana Kalanidhi was conferred on Padmaja Srinivasan (vocal), Nadha Kalanidhi on C. Lakshminarayan (violin), Laya Kalanidhi on Tanjavur S. Subramanyam (mridangam) and Umayalapuram K Narayanaswami (ghatam).

The awards comprising a silver medallion and a plaque were presented by S. Seshadri, Hon Secretary, Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts and Sangeetha Sabha.

Later, Bandup Fine Arts honoured S. Seshadri himself by conferring the title, 'Sangeetha Seva Rathnam' on him in recognition of his meritorious service to Carnatic music for over 53 years.

The evening's programme concluded with a vocal recital by Padmaja Srinivasan accompanied by C. Lakshminarayan (violin), Tanjore S. Subramanyam (mridangam) and Umayalapuram K Narayanaswami (ghatam).

Forth coming Programmes Mumbai

Gayaka Samrat Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavathar's Birth Centenary Celebrations.

Three Day Music Festival

Nov 23, 96: Hyderabad Brothers (vocal) Sriram Parasuram (violin), K.V.

Prasad (mrudangam) N. Govindarajan (ghatam).

Nov 24, 96: Neyveli Santhanagopalan (vocal) Sriram Parasuram (violin), K.V. Prasad (mrudangam) N. Govinda-

rajan (ghatam)

Nov 25, 96: Kdadri Gopalnath (saxophone) Kanyakumari (violin) Guruvayur Dorai (mridangam) Mumbai N.M. Jayaram (kanjira) Bangalore Rajashekar (morching).

Venue: Indian Gymkhana Grounds, Matunga, Mumbai 400016.

Adarsha Fetes Senior Vocalist

Seethalakshmi Venkateshan, senior vocalist in Carnatic Music and a renowned teacher in the genre was conferred with the title "Sangeetha Laya Saamraagni" by the Adarsha Samsad in Bangalore recently.

The conferment of the title formed part of the Adarsha Bharatiya Samskritika Samsad's three-day Sangeetotsav that began on October 4. Well-known violinist A. Veerabhadraiah felicitated the artiste who has been the recipient of many prestigious honours in her distinguished career. Seethalakshmi thanked the organisers for the honour done to her and Veerabhadraiah for his nice words about her.

Though beset with a soar throat, Seethalakshmi rose to the occasion to give a full-fledged concert, reeling off as many as 12 numbers, many preceded by alap and decorated with 'swara korvais'. Saraswathi (Athana), Guruleka (Gourimanohari) and Sogasuchuda Tharama (Kannadagoula) among them may be recounted. Sahana (Raghupate Rama) and Varali (Mamava Meenakshi) were the ragas to receive a detailed airing. The Bhairavi piece was specially impressive.

Her student Padmini who lent Seethalakshmi vocal support was given enough scope to display her talent.

The Sangeetotsav began with a

saxophone recital by Mangalore K. Anantharam. Youthful T.V. Ramprasad flanked by H.K. Venkataram on the violin, N.G. Ravi on the mridangam and K.N. Krishnamoorthy on the ghatam was the attraction on the second day.

Starting with a Vasudevachar Varnam in Nalinakanti, Prasad regaled the listeners with a rich repast. Neekeladaya (Kadanakuthoohala), Amba Neelayatakshi (Nilambari), and Teliyaleru (Dhenuka), provided him the warming-up for a neat Pantuvarali (Vaadera) enriched by an appealing 'niraval'. Madhyamavati (Palinchu Kamakshi) was the main item for the day and the confident manner he disposed the piece ensured that he had arrived.

Kusuma Rao

Raghavendra Aradhana

Raghavendra Swami Seva Samithi Koramangala celebrated the Raghavendra Aradhana on Aug 31, 96 with a delightful vocal concert by Bhagyalakshmi Gundu Rao, accompanied by Basavanagudi G. Nataraj (violin) and Nagendra Udupa (Mridangam).

S. Krishna Singh chairman of the Samithi spoke about the organisation and V. Anand, secretary proposed a vote of thanks.

Know Your Artistes

Mangalore K. Anantharam



Mangalore K. Anantharam, the saxophone artiste, was born in 1946 in Kokkada, a small village near Mangalore. His father, Kokkada Dharanappa, who was himself a Nagaswaram player, initiated Anantharam into playing Nagaswaram.

Later Anantharam underwent gurukula training in vocal music under Kanchana Venkatasubramanyam Iyer at Kanchana in 1967.

Soon Karkala Narayanaswamy, a nagaswara player took him to Karkala to teach nagaswaram for six years and by 1973 Anantharam became a fullfledged nagaswaram player.

Puttur Venkatappa Dogra, with his newly acquired saxophone at that time was a rage. Anantharam adapted saxophone never to look back.

He is a 'B' grade artist in AIR. Recognising his talent, Keshavananda Thirtha Swamiji of Yadner Mutt, conferred the title, Saxophone Samrat in 1992. Later the title 'Saxophone Sarvabhouma' by Kattilu Durga Parameshwari Temple came his way, conferring its Kattilu Gopalakshina

Asranna, chief priest of the temple.

He gave his first concert in Bangalore at Malleshwaram Sangeetha Sabha, in 1993 and last year he played at the Mylapore Fine Arts, at Chennai. He has played in almost all the sabhas at Chennai, including Nungambakkam Cultural Academy, The Indian Fine Arts Society, Narada Gana Sabha, Rasika Ranjani Sabha, Karthik Fine Arts, Kalarasana, Nadopasana, to name a few. He has played in Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts and Sangeetha Sabha, Mumbai,

Mangalore K Anantharam
Sri Venkataramana Temple, Car Street
Mangalore 575001 ☎ 0824-441922

K.R.V. Pulikeshi



K.R.V. Pulikeshi, young and talented dancer hails from a family of cultural background.

Son of Raghusutha and K.R. Padmini, a big name in the literary field, Pulikeshi was initiated into Bharatanatyam by his brother, K.R.S. Prasanna himself a reputed Bharatanatyam dancer.

After initial training under Lalitha

Srinivasan, a leading exponent of the Mysore style and later under Narmada. Pulikeshi graduated from the Natya Institute of Kathak and Choreography headed by Maya Rao.

Pulikeshi has performed in many prestigious dance festivals like the India International Trade Fair, Nitya Nritya, Pattadakol Dance Mahotsava and National Jamboree.

He has toured France, England and Switzerland giving performances with his brother.

Pulikeshi, apart from being a dancer, is a good nattuvangam artiste too. He learnt the intricacies of nattuvangam from his brother and the mridangam vidwan B.R. Seshadri.

He has been trained in Martial Arts of Manipur by Sonour Chand and Khilton Nanymoithem and in abhinaya by T.K. Mahalingam Pillai.

He has assisted in choreographing many ballets. He is now imparting training to students in his Shantala Arts Academy. He was recently felicitated by 'Kinkini' during its 10th Anniversary.

K.R.V. Pulikeshi
7 Pulikeshi Road, 1 Main
Yeshwanth-pur, Bangalore 560022,
☎ 364758

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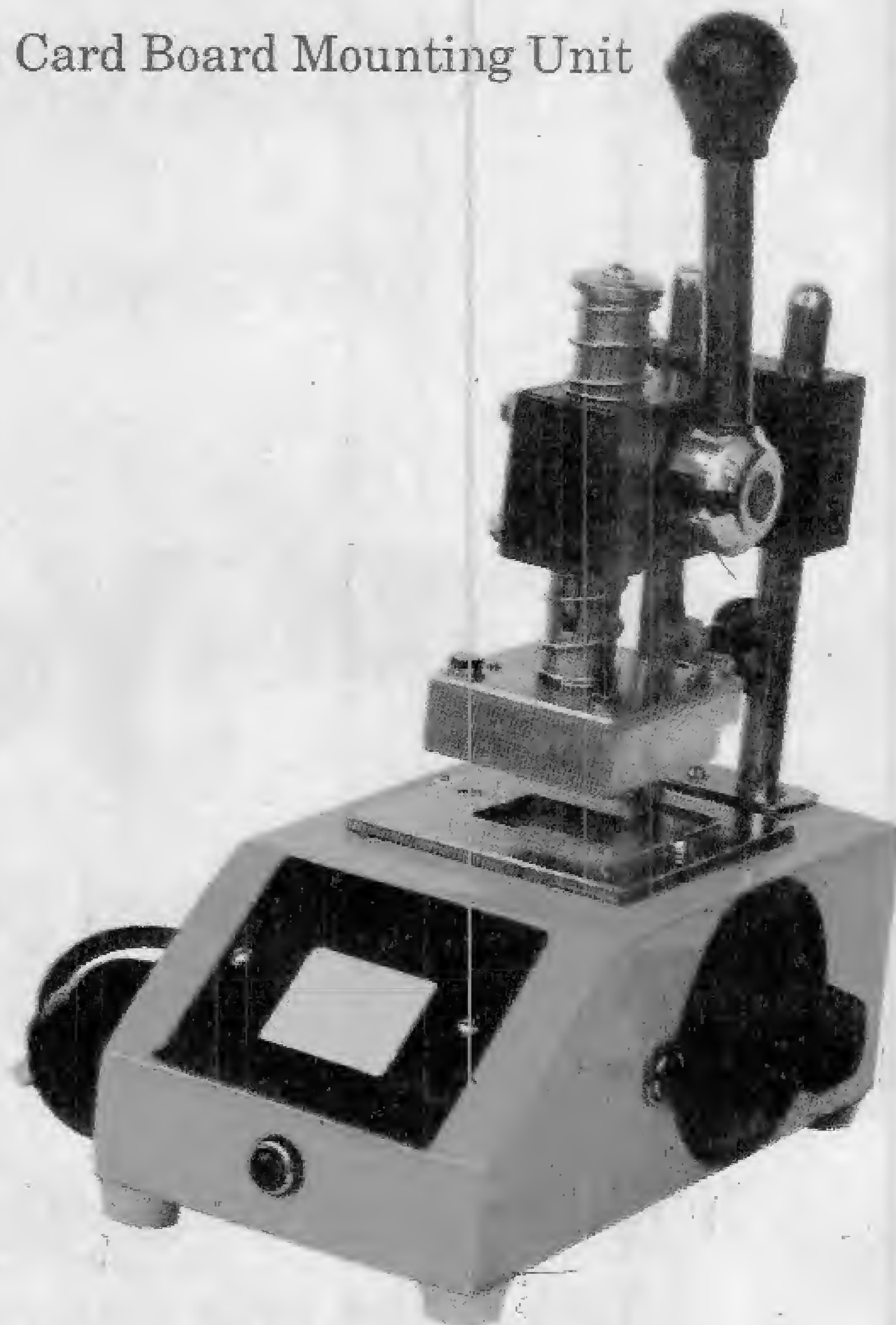
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